

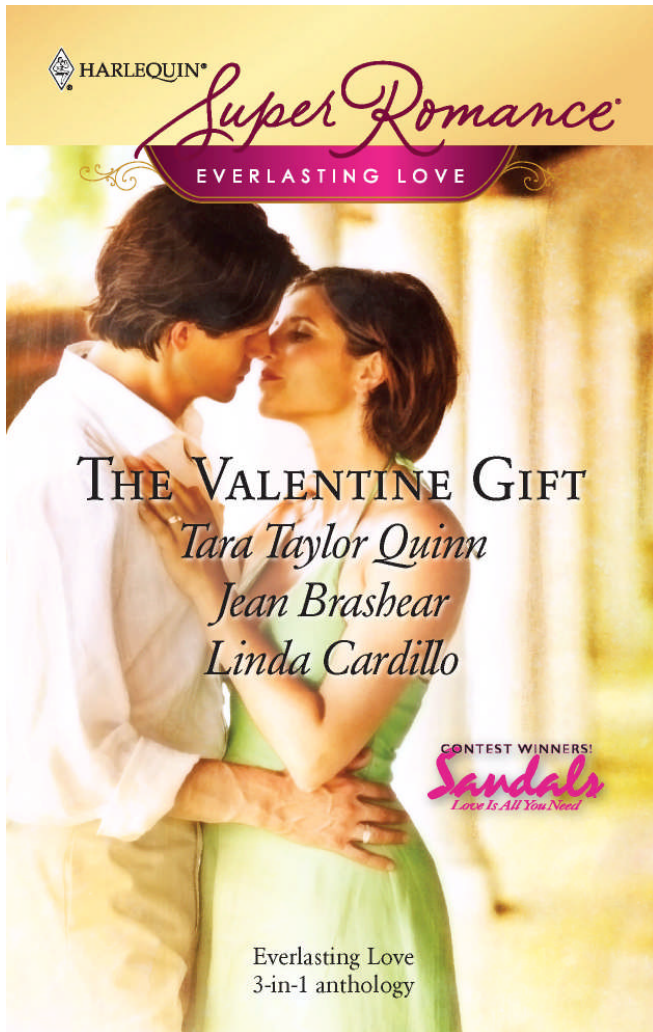
My Writing Life

January 2008

Dear Friends,

My warmest greetings for a peaceful and joyful year ahead!

I look back in gratitude at 2007, which was such a pivotal year in my life as a writer. It's truly thrilling to see my name on the cover of a book; but even more satisfying is hearing from readers and knowing that my words have touched them in some way. Robert McKee, in his book *STORY*, writes that we look to stories for the answer to Aristotle's question: How should a human being lead his life? I continue to seek the answer in the personal and emotional tales my characters are whispering in my ear.



The Valentine Gift

Within the pages of the anthology *THE VALENTINE GIFT*, I invite you to experience the vineyards of the Rheingau in my novella, "The Hand That Gives the Rose," the story of Marielle Hartmann and Tomas Marek. Here's a tiny sip:

The thing Marielle immediately noticed about Tomas Marek was his hands—pale, slender fingers in a pair of black wool gloves with the tips cut off. They were the hands of a musician, a violinist perhaps, or an artist used to handling delicate brushes. They were hands unmarked by weather or rough work, hands that had not lifted heavy crates of wine bottles, hands that hadn't tilled or planted or pruned. For Marielle, Tomas Marek's hands were both beautiful and useless.

From the book *THE VALENTINE GIFT*
© 2008 by Linda Cardillo Platzer

THE VALENTINE GIFT arrives in stores on January 8. Please look for it, and ask for it if you don't see it!

A Busy Fall

One of the true pleasures of my writing life is meeting with readers. Whether I'm sitting in someone's living room for a book club gathering or standing at a podium in front of eighty people, I thrive on the give-and-take of such encounters. This fall I had the opportunity to listen to a group of Iranian immigrants discuss *DANCING ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS*; read an excerpt from my work-in-progress, *SALEM STREET*, and be met by the laughter and recognition of the International Women's Club of Springfield; and share the story of how I came to write *DANCING* with the members of the Pelham Women's Club at their "Festa Italiana." That audience, many in their seventies and eighties and the children of immigrants like my grandparents, regaled me with their own family stories.

I am also blessed with friends who invited me to speak to their clubs or join them in the celebration of the publication of their own books and others who filled the seats at my public events. Thank you all!



Rotary president (and neighbor) Pat Gardner welcomed me as the speaker at a recent Rotary luncheon.



Harlequin Everlasting Love authors (and good friends!) Geri Krotow, Ann DeFee and I take a break from signing our books in Annapolis, part of the launch of Geri's book, *A RENDEZVOUS TO REMEMBER*.

In the news and on the Web

THE VALENTINE GIFT will get some visibility in January as my co-authors (Jean Brashear and Tara Taylor Quinn) and I will be featured in spotlights on two websites:

<http://romancebandits.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.noveltalk.com/spotlight.htm>

Springfield's newspaper, *The Republican*, ran a wonderful "Local Spotlight" on me in the December 27, 2007, edition.

The Lawrence History Center invited me to write an article for its newsletter, *Lawrence History News*, because of my inclusion of the Bread and Roses Strike in *DANCING ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS*. The article will appear electronically on the Center's website in the coming months: <http://www.lawrencehistorycenter.org>.

Upcoming Appearances

January 23

7:30 p.m.

Barnes & Noble Booksellers

Newburgh, New York

January 27

2:00 p.m.

Hendrick Hudson Free Library

Montrose, New York

January TBA

Storrs Library Author Speaker Series

Longmeadow, Massachusetts

February 3

Ladies Philoptochos Society

St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Springfield, Massachusetts

February 9

2:00 p.m.

Barnes & Noble Booksellers

Holyoke, Massachusetts

February 16

11:00 a.m.

Charter Oak Romance Writers

South Glastonbury Public Library

South Glastonbury, Connecticut



February 18

5:30 p.m.

Zonta Club of Springfield

Best Western Hotel

West Springfield, Massachusetts

April 11-12

Let Your Imagination Take Flight:

Come to the Edge

New England Chapter-Romance Writers of
America 2008 Conference

Crowne Plaza Hotel

Natick, Massachusetts

More to come . . . stay tuned.

Book Clubs

If your book club would like to read “The Hand That Gives the Rose,” I’d be delighted to join you in your discussion—in person if you are within traveling distance of western New England or by phone if you are beyond it. Please email me at linda@lindacardillo.com for more information.

Remember to check my website, www.lindacardillo.com, for news and updates on appearances.

Work in Progress

“You know, you write wonderfully about food,” said my editor to me one day. “Why not use that in your next book?” So I went off to let that idea simmer for awhile, and came back with an idea about a family that establishes a restaurant in the 1940s in Boston’s North End, the city’s Little Italy. Like many authors, I’ve woven bits and pieces of the world I’ve experienced or the lives I’ve observed into this new story. The restaurant is located on a corner of Salem Street, where I used to live in a third-floor walkup; one of the narrators, Rose, the matriarch of the family, is an homage to my mother’s generation—the women who were the first in their families to be born in America and who embodied pluck and promise as they loosened the ties to the old country, but who never let go of the importance of food in nurturing their families.

Here’s a “taste” of what’s to come. This passage is narrated by Rose’s daughter Toni, who’s been invited by her boyfriend to Thanksgiving dinner in Ohio.

My mother, in the midst of preparing Thanksgiving dinner for the family, decided to make extra for me to take to Ohio. We were driving with Bobby’s sister Sandra and her husband, who lived in Providence. Rose made a lasagna with the handmade fennel sausage that she got from Lou Cuneo, the butcher on Prince Street who supplied the restaurant.

“I froze it so it will keep in the cooler while you’re driving. Tell Bobby’s mother, one hour at 350° and keep it covered with tin foil till the last ten minutes.”

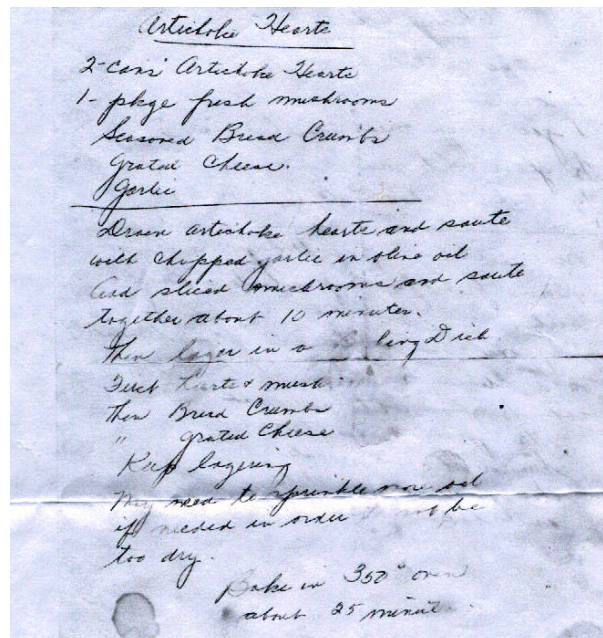
She also put together a basket of her own preserves—a quart of plum tomatoes with whole basil leaves floating in their midst; eggplant strips pickled in olive oil, wine vinegar and hot pepper flakes; marinated wild mushrooms she had picked herself in some secret pocket of the urban landscape she had discovered years ago, packed with slivers of garlic and flecks of parsley.

Canton, Ohio, is a long way from the North End. I should have recognized in that trip what it foretold about my marriage to Bobby.

Hazel, Bobby’s mother, while politely grateful for the provisions I had brought, clearly had never encountered anything like them and didn’t know what to do with them. Out of deference to me she did actually bake the lasagna and we ate it for supper on Saturday night—not as a pre-turkey course on Thanksgiving Day as my own family did.

The meal we actually sat down to in Hazel’s elegantly decorated dining room, with monogrammed silver on the table and striped silk upholstery on the Chippendale chairs, resembled nothing I had ever eaten, except for the turkey itself. She served scalloped oysters, which, I discovered, consisted mostly of crushed soda crackers and lots of cream and butter; succotash with corn, lima beans and an ample amount of paprika; corn bread stuffing—which Hazel called “dressing;” and an aspic made with V-8 juice that had stuffed olives, celery and green peppers suspended in its shimmering middle.

© 2008 by Linda Cardillo Platzer



My mother’s recipe for baked artichoke hearts.